I Know This Isn't Easy

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I Know This Isn't Easy

by sourweather

Summary

Adam gets a call from Nigel, late at night, and he can tell that something is wrong. All Nigel wants is to hear Adam talk, though.

Notes

man idk I was crying all day and it was 4am and I couldn't sleep so I was just. feeling miserable! Bon Appétit? I guess?

Adam almost rejects the call. It's two o'clock in the morning, Nigel knows perfectly well that Adam is sleeping. He has work tomorrow, it's very impolite to be waking him. Still, he supposes it might be an emergency, so he answers.

"Nigel?" he mumbles into the phone.

"Hey, gorgeous," Nigel replies. "Sorry if I woke you."

He rubs at his eyes. "You did. What is it?"

Nigel doesn't speak right away. Adam is becoming slightly irritated. "Nigel?"

"...Just missed you, that's all."

Adam smiles softly. "That's very sweet, but you can see me tomorrow after work. It's late, and-"

"Baby please just talk to me, yeah? Just for a few minutes. I know I'm fuckin' up your routine but just do it for me. Just this once, I promise."

He sighs, his mouth twisting. "Okay, Nigel. Just this once."

"Thank you."

He lies back in bed, making himself comfortable. "Okay. What would you like to talk about?"

Nigel grunts on the other end of the line. Adam wants to ask if he's okay, but before he can Nigel says "Anything you want, angel. We can talk about your day, or the stars, or anything you want to fucking talk about. Just talk."

Adam frowns. This isn't like Nigel. He doesn't call Adam for no reason, especially not this late at night. "Is everything alright?"

"Adam, please. Just talk to me."

"Well," he begins slowly. "My day was stressful. There's a new girl working in my department and she's very chatty. So that was distracting."

Nigel huffs out a breath. It sounds labored. "Uh huh. Keep going, baby."

"I saw a white cat on the way to the bus stop today, though. She didn't have a collar, and I almost considered going back with food and trying to bring her home."

"You should do it."

"Maybe. You could help me name it, too. Would you like to have a cat, Nigel?"

The other man doesn't answer. "Nigel? Hello?"

"...I'm here, angel."

He frowns. "Are you sure you're okay? You sound tired."

"Adam, I need to tell you something."

Adam sits up straighter in bed. "Is it serious?"

"I...I wanna tell you that I fucking love you, Adam."

"Oh." He smiles. "I love you too, Nigel."

"You're the best thing that's ever happened to me, you know that, don't you? I'm the luckiest fucker in the world for having you in my life."

"Nigel..."

The other man lets out a soft sob on the other end of the line. His voice is weak and thick. "I'm gonna love you forever, okay Adam? Always. Fucking always. If you ever...fuck, if you ever feel like nobody's in your corner, I want you to remember that I fucking love you."

Adam's heart is pounding now. Something is wrong, something is *wrong*. "Do you need me to come get you? Where...where are you, right now? Are you at work?"

The sigh that meets him through the phone rattles, and it makes Adam wince. "I'm...I'm fine, beautiful. Just...a bit sad, I guess. I'll let you get some rest, yeah? But I love you. So much."

"I love you too, Nigel," Adam says, and the next moment the call ends.

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Adam gets woken up by a knock on his door, before his alarm even rings. He stumbles to answer it, and is greeted by two police officers.

"Good morning," he mutters, eyeing them up and down anxiously.

One of the officers smiles. "Good morning, I'm looking for a Mr. Adam Raki."

He nods. "That's me. Can I help you?"

The officer glances at his partner. He seems nervous. "Could we come in? I'd like to speak with you about something."

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I know this isn't easy, he'd said. I know this isn't easy. I'm sorry you have to hear this, but—

I know this isn't easy, but your partner, Nigel Banyai, was found—

This isn't easy. He was found dead, early this morning, from a gunshot wound to his abdomen. Our homicide department is currently hard at work—

This isn't. This isn't. The estimated time of death is just after two o'clock in the morning. The estimated time of death is about ten minutes after he was shot.

Easy. Is there someone we can call for you, so you aren't alone, Mr. Raki.

You're alone, Mr. Raki.

I know this isn't easy.

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"Adam?"

He barely looks up, face still buried in Nigel's pillow. Breathing in his scent. Darko is looking at him like he's a wounded baby bird. "Go away."

He sighs. "I'm afraid I can't do that, bud."

"I don't want to talk to you. The police just wouldn't leave unless I called someone."

"That's fine," Darko tells him, taking a seat on the edge of the bed. "We don't have to talk."

Adam just hides his face again, Nigel's shirt loose around his shoulders. He doesn't want Darko to see him cry. He doesn't want anyone to see him do anything, he just wants to curl up and disappear.

After a few long minutes of softly sobbing into Nigel's pillow, Adam realizes that Darko is still there. "Leave me alone!" He shouts, though it sounds weak and wobbly when it leaves.

Darko sighs. "Alright, I can go out in the living room if you need some space, but I'm not leaving."

Adam frowns. "Why not?"

The other man almost laughs. "Why not? My best friend in the fucking world thought you hung the damned stars in the sky, Adam. He talked about you like you were the second fucking coming."

Adam smiles sadly. Darko's face turns soft. "He loved you, man. And I'm not gonna leave you to grieve on your own when I know you need somebody on your side."

A fresh wave of tears stings in Adam's eyes. He bites his lip. Whenever you feel like nobody's in your corner, Adam, remember that I fucking love you.

Darko grunts in surprise when Adam throws his arms around him, hugging him and wetting his shirt with tears. He only freezes for a moment, and then he's holding Adam in return.

"I keep replaying the last conversation we had in my head," Adam confesses. "I didn't know at the time, that I wouldn't get to talk to him again. I wish I'd said more. I wish I'd kept talking, for just another minute. That I made it count."

Darko rubs his back, trying to be soothing. "Well, what was the last thing you said to him?"

Adam sniffs. Smiles. "I told him that I loved him."

Darko nods. "Sounds like you said all the important shit, then. That fucker never really minded what you were talking about, anyway. As long as you were talking."

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"Stop smoking, you're making her uncomfortable."

Darko gives him a pointed look as he takes a long drag. "Come on, man. We've been out here for a fucking hour. I'm cold. Let me take you home"

Adam just stays put, crouched on the sidewalk near the bus stop. He's got a tin of cat food a few feet away, under a street lamp. That stupid cat keeps staring at him from the shrubs. Both of them are too stubborn to just abandon their standoff.

"Adam, come on. Things probably got rabies anyway. Or tetanus. Or fuckin'...Mesothelioma, hell, I don't know."

"She looks pretty healthy," Adam argues. "I think she just ran away from home.

Darko shakes his head, watching as the cat sneaks out from the bushes again. Adam is close enough to grab it, this time, but he doesn't. Just sits there, watching. Lets it eat. Darko's heart- what's left of it anyway- twists painfully. He's a good kid. And Darko's smart enough to know that this is about more than a fucking cat. Fuck it. If it helps it helps.

It's cleaning its paws, full and calm, when Adam makes his move. Kid's quicker than he looks, and he manages to trap the thing in an oversized hoodie. And it's yowling and throwing a fit, but Adam is firm and gentle. They wrestle it back to Darko's car, and then they're off.

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"It's not coming out."

Adam shrugs, lying on his stomach on the living room floor. The cat darted under the couch the second it got a chance, now they're just staring at each other again.

"She's just scared. She'll come out eventually."

Darko sniffs. "It's got fleas."

"I'll give her a bath when she calms down."

"...It's gonna ruin your fuckin' furniture."

"I'll buy her a scratching post."

"Is there *anything* I could say to make you put this fucking cat back where you found it?"

Adam smiles softly. "No."

Darko rolls his eyes, drops to the floor, and lies beside Adam. The cat watches them in return. "What are you gonna name it?"

Adam's mouth twists. "I haven't decided." He sighs, some of the light leaving his eyes. "I was planning on asking Nigel to name her. He was better at that sort of thing."

Darko huffs. "You don't wanna do that. Nigel would've named her something fucking moronic and you would've been stuck with it."

Adam shrugs. "I would've liked it."

Darko chews his cheek, tries to think of something to say.

"...Hey, how about, uh...Venus?"

"Venus?"

"Yeah. Like the planet."

Adam nods to himself, thinking it over. He smiles. "I like that."

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